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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 MANAGUA 000244

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STATE PASS HHS FOR SECRETARY LEAVITT AND OFFICE OF GLOBAL
HEALTH AFFAIRS (STEIGER AND CORREA-DE-ARAUJO)
MCA FOR AMBASSADOR DANILOVICH
DEPT FOR WHA A/S SHANNON, WHA/CEN, NEA/I
DHS FOR SECRETARY'S OFFICE (ADAM ISLES)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/29/2017
TAGS: PGOV PINR KDEM NU PREL
SUBJECT: SECRETARY LEAVITT,S MEETING WITH SALVADORAN
PRESIDENT SACA

Classified By: Ambassador Paul A. Trivelli. Reasons 1.4 (B,D).

11. (C) Summary: On January 9, 2007, the U.S. Presidential Delegation (Presdel), led by Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Michael Leavi

GOE Shares Regional Leaders' Enthusiasm for Health Initiative

12. (SBU) Secretary Leavitt outlined his vision for the new regional health initiative, whose centerpiece is a regional training facility in Panama that will train hundreds of health workers from the region per year -- in particular nurses, technicians and community health workers from rural areas. President Saca congratulated the Secretary on the initiative and commented Salvadoran Health Minister Maza had briefed him on the concept. President Saca, who promised to follow up on the details with his Health and Foreign Ministers, added that the Salvadoran Government maintains a health fund that focuses on training rural health workers. He suggested this fund, which receives World Bank financing, could complement the new regional initiative.

13. (SBU) The Secretary described the next steps in the program -- drafting a Memorandum of Understanding, visiting the participating countries, and possibly signing the agreement in a regional venue. President Saca suggested the new initiative could perhaps benefit from some of Plan Puebla-Panama's health-related activities. Vice Foreign Minister Eduardo Calix elaborated on this option and specified the utility of Plan Puebla-Panama's disease surveillance programs. The Secretary lauded President Saca for this "bold approach" and remarked that training in disease detection through the HHS Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Platform Site in Guatemala would complement the Panama center's priorities.

Salvador's Model MCA Compact Development Process

14. (C) Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) John Danilovich thanked President Saca for his tremendous support in developing El Salvador's exemplary MCA program and noted El Salvador's program and its terms of engagement serve as a model for other countries. President Saca, who conveyed his deep appreciation for his country's opportunity to benefit from the MCA, added that, now that El Salvador has ratified the Compact, it is "ready to start." The MCA is particularly important because it will operate in El Salvador's "depressed north," he said. Ambassador Danilovich observed that some of the other MCA countries are "jealous" of the high funding level of the El Salvador MCA Compact. President Saca offered his country's technical guidance to help other countries develop their MCA programs and added that careful organization and his close personal involvement had been vital to El Salvador's success.

Commitment to Iraq Continues

15. (C) Saca next referred to his conversation with President Bush over the December holidays, by sharing he had thanked the President for his support -- including the MCA program -- and had also raised El Salvador's commitment to deploy its eighth team to Iraq in January. Secretary Leavitt extended the USG's deep appreciation of the Salvadoran contributions to the Iraq effort.

TPS and Other Immigration Concerns

16. (SBU) After President Saca conveyed to Presdel his appreciation for Ambassador Barclay's fine work in El Salvador and lamented Barclay's imminent departure, Saca said he looks forward to continuing the bilateral agenda with his successor. Saca highlighted bilateral cooperation on the MCA, continued TPS for some 250,000 Salvadorans in the United States, as well as cooperation on police and judicial reform as some of the most important aspects of the bilateral relationship. Expanding on the "fundamental" subject of immigration, President Saca praised the United States for its generosity towards Salvadorans who are residing in the United States and trusted it would continue.

17. (SBU) Secretary Leavitt assured President Saca that President Bush is "unyielding" in the need for a comprehensive immigration approach and

18. (SBU) President Saca mentioned that Attorney General Gonzales' upcoming visit to El Salvador could provide an opportunity to discuss this and other immigration concerns, including a way to address the U.S. deportations of Salvadorans with criminal records to their country of origin. Saca explained that, while most of the Salvadoran deportees are not criminals, the GOES cannot detain those who are,

because it does not receive enough advance notice of their records and their arrival. Hence, according to President Saca, many of these criminals cause trouble in El Salvador, and a sizable number probably return illegally to the United States within months of their deportation. A bilateral agreement to remedy this vicious circle is in order, suggested Saca.

Kudos for CAFTA
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19. (SBU) With nothing but praise for the positive impact of CAFTA on the region, President Saca raised with Presdel the idea of holding a CAFI

El Salvador to Host 15th Anniversary of Regional Peace Accord
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10. (U) President Saca proudly informed the Presdel that on January 16, 2007, El Salvador will host the celebration of the 15th anniversary of the Central American Peace Accord. He related that the event will offer another opportunity for Central American Presidents to meet and discuss issues of common concern. According to Saca, at the venue he will propose the region establish a new objective -- social peace in Central America.

11. (U) Participants:

El Salvador:
President Tony Saca
Vice Foreign Minister Eduardo Calix
Special Mission Ambassador Jose Chavez
Ambassador to Nicaragua Francisco Immendia
Private Secretary Elmer Charlaix
Communication Secretary Julio Rank
Protocol Chief Francisco Merino

U.S.:
Secretary Michael Leavitt
MCC CEO John Danilovich
Assistant Secretary Tom Shannon
Ambassador Paul Trivelli
HHS Special Assistant to the Secretary for International Affairs William Steiger
USAID Director Alex Dickie
MCA-N Country Director Matt Bohn
Political Counselor/notetaker Victoria Alvarado

12. (U) This cable was cleared by Secretary Leavitt, MCC CEO Ambassador Danilovich, and Department of State A/S Shannon.
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